snapAG ANIMAL CARE

TRANSPORTING FARM ANIMALS

Animal welfare, the humane treatment of animals, is very important to the people who raise and care for them. Ensuring that farm animals (**livestock**) are treated humanely during transportation is part of responsible animal care.

WHY farmers and ranchers transport livestock

- to move them to better sources of feed
- to become a part of a feedlot to be fed for market
- for shows or competitions
- to breed them with another animal
- for health reasons (to see a veterinarian, for example)
- because of changes in ownership
- when they are sold and shipped for processing

HUMANE TRANSPORT

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) through the *Health of Animal Regulations* oversees the humane transportation of animals in Canada.[2] Every person responsible for transporting animals in Canada must ensure that the entire transportation process including loading, transit and unloading animals does not cause injury, pain or suffering.

The regulations address weather (hot/humid and cold), access to food and water, adequate space and the type of equipment used. Also outlined are the responsibilities of the driver, including routes, stops, maximum travel times, etc.

The Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals – Transportation[3] developed by the National Farm Animal Care Council outlines the expectations for all those involved in transporting farm animals. The codes are based on years of research by animal scientists, combined with the practical experience of farmers and veterinarians.

It is illegal to do anything that would cause suffering to an animal at any point in the transportation process. If a person's actions or neglect are considered animal abuse, they could also be charged and convicted under the **Criminal Code of Canada** and/or provincial regulations[4], resulting in a fine and/or jail sentence.

Many livestock haulers are certified through the **Canadian Livestock Transport (CLT)** Certification Program.[5]

TRANSPORTING FARM ANIMALS

DIFFERENT ANIMAL = DIFFERENT CARE

Not all animals can be transported in the same way. Some animals require special care. For example, pigs are semi-tropical animals most comfortable at temperatures preferred by people. Special care must be taken when transporting pigs during periods of extreme cold. Beef cattle or sheep adapt easily to cold weather and so can be more easily transported during winter months.[5]

Anyone who transports sick animals can be charged with animal abuse. The exception is veterinarian-approved transport for the purposes of seeking medical attention.[6]

Animals are routinely checked during transport to ensure they are safe and as comfortable as possible. During the entire process, from loading to unloading, detailed records must be kept.

Farmers and others involved in livestock transportation are committed to keeping up-to-date on new research and technological advances in facilities and equipment to improve transportation practices and ensure that animals are transported in the most humane, safe and effective manner possible.

HOW ARE MOST FARM ANIMALS TRANSPORTED IN CANADA?

Large groups of livestock travelling a long distance are transported by semi-trailer truck. If travelling a short distance, many farmers and ranchers will move small numbers of animals in specially designed trailers.

WHY IS LIVESTOCK TRANSPORT IMPORTANT TO FOOD QUALITY & SAFETY?

Injuries, disease and the effects of hot/humid or cold weather during transportation may negatively affect the quality and safety of meat. Also, increased stress levels in animals during transportation can cause animals to shed more bacteria leading to the spread of diseases to healthy animals, which can contaminate meat.

Stress also alters meat protein composition, making food products from stressed animals more prone to the growth of bacteria and spoilage which affects quality: taste, tenderness, keeping quality and colour. Handler and driver inexperience can result in animals with bruises or injuries which also lowers meat quality.[7]